

During my time in Congress I have worked to improve the lives of women and advance gender equality. The status of women and girls is a key indicator of a community's well-being. Whether we are working on addressing the 77 cents that women make for every dollar earned by a man or reducing health disparities women face, I have made improving the lives of women a top priority in my work.

Women are among those who benefit most from the recently enacted health insurance reform legislation. Previously, women were often charged higher premiums solely on the basis of their gender. Women also disproportionately lack the option of obtaining health coverage from their employer. Reforms will ensure that nearly every American woman receives adequate health insurance.

As Vice Chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, the largest bipartisan caucus in Congress, I have spearheaded efforts to ensure women are protected and treated fairly. I joined a group of Representatives to introduce and pass the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which ensures that workers have a reasonable amount of time to file a pay discrimination claim and can have their day in court. I have worked to improve the safety and accessibility of affordable childcare for families and have led the effort to make shelters and supportive services more accessible to victims of family and domestic violence. I have written legislation that if passed would help domestic violence shelters across the country continue providing crucial services.

Working to elevate the status of women around the world is crucial because countries with an active female population tend to avoid extremism. I have worked to increase resources for international initiatives that combat maternal mortality and improve female literacy rates in developing countries.